

Kentucky Teacher

FEBRUARY 2001

Third-year contracts available to some highly skilled educators

By Faun S. Fishback

Kentucky Department of Education

The Kentucky Board of Education will allow one-year contract extensions for up to 20 highly skilled educators who are nearing the end of their two-year contracts with the Kentucky Department of Education. The change in contract length for selected highly skilled educators was made at the board's meeting Feb. 5 and 6.

Each biennium, the department recruits up to 30 educators from school districts to help low-performing schools improve academic performance, learning environment and efficiency. Districts grant professional leave so these educators can work on contract for the department.

The department requested the contract extensions to ensure a balance of experience in future cadres of highly skilled educators and to foster continuity for the schools in greatest need of assistance. Tom Peterson, the department's associate commissioner of leadership and school improvement, told the board that the ability to employ a highly skilled educator for the third year would give additional opportunities to provide direct service and build school and district capacity

to sustain change.

The number of highly skilled educators who receive offers to extend their contracts by one year will be determined by the needs of schools, a review of the work's impact on student performance, district approval and a performance review of the highly skilled educator, Peterson said. Present and future highly skilled educators will receive

semiannual reviews, including quarterly on-site visits, observations and discussions with staff at the assigned schools. Under the board's new policy, the department can retain no more than 20 highly skilled educators in a cadre.

Districts will be notified by April 1 of any contract extension offers that are made. The highly skilled educator's employing district must agree to the con-

tract extension before it can take effect.

Other board business addressed these issues:

- The board gave final approval to amendments to the Minority Teacher Recruitment regulation. The amendments require districts to provide more specific information each year to the department concerning applicants and new employees for certified positions. A management plan, developed by the department, explains how data about minority recruitment and retention will be used and how the department will work with districts having difficulty recruiting minority applicants.

The public hearing on this regulation will begin at 10 a.m. on March 28 in Frankfort. Those interested in speaking or providing written comments must notify Deputy Commissioner Kevin M. Noland by March 21. His address is 500 Mero St., Frankfort, Ky. 40601. His phone number is (502) 564-4474.

- The board also approved a policy that establishes calculations for the norm-referenced assessment component of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System. The calculations were proposed by the School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council and are supported by the national testing experts who advise the board on CATS issues.

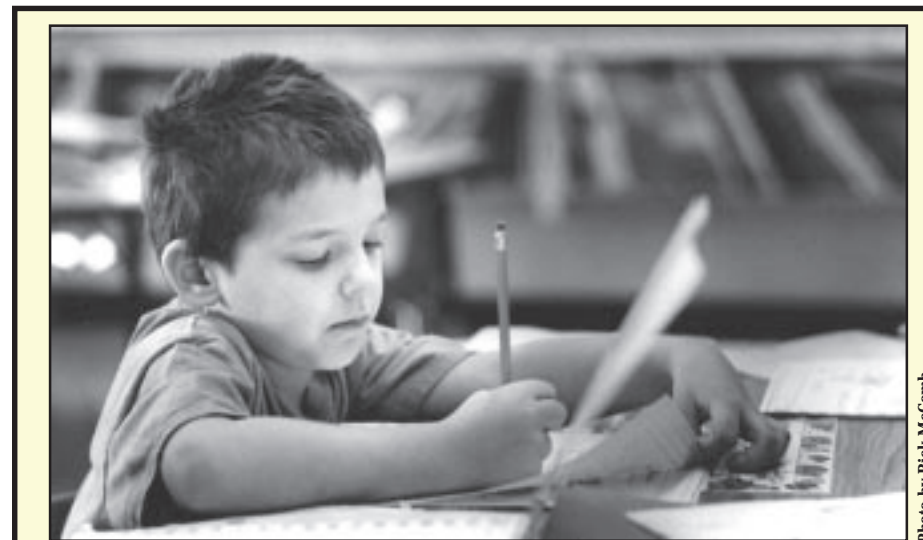


Photo by Rick McComb

MAKING HIS MARK - Channing Yates works on an assignment in Patsy Nickell's class at Millard Hensley Elementary School in Magoffin County. State education leaders want to ensure that Channing and all of his primary classmates throughout the state are reading proficiently before they enter 4th grade. See Page 2.

More than 1,700 Kentucky teachers help state board set performance standards

For the past year, teachers representing all areas of Kentucky have been working with the Kentucky Department of Education to set standards that will define novice, apprentice, proficient and distinguished performance on the Kentucky Core Content Tests. The goal of the standards-setting process is to define clear, consistent, agreed-upon standards for student achievement in the state.

The teachers have been involved in what Commonwealth Accountability Testing System consultants believe is the most comprehensive standards-setting process ever undertaken by any state. Many states use just one or a few of several proven standards-setting techniques, but Kentucky is using them all. More than 1,700 teachers have been involved in the process, which include these seven steps:

Step 1: Review and draft student performance standards descriptors (December 1999/January 2000); 90 teachers.

Step 2: Contrasting Groups standards setting procedure (April 2000); 1,100 teachers.

Step 3: Application of the Jaeger-Mills procedure (October 2000); 320 teachers.

Step 4: CTB Bookmark procedure (December 2000); 300 teachers.

Step 5: Synthesis of Steps 2, 3 and 4 (February 2001); 150 teachers.

Step 6: Department of Education prepares recommendation to Kentucky Board of Education based on steps 1-5.

Step 7: State board considers and approves standards (April/June 2001).

Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit said he considers the process "solid and trustworthy" because so many Kentucky teachers have looked at the information from so many perspectives.

"The process isn't over yet," he said, "but we expect to have a recommendation to the state board in time for consideration and final action by April or June."

When students can read, they can succeed

By Gene Wilhoit
Education Commissioner

Last month in this space, I introduced what I think are the top three priorities for getting all students and all schools to Kentucky's goal of proficiency — a score of 100 by the year 2014. I talked about one of those priorities: the need to close the achievement gap between majority and minority students.

This month I draw your attention to another priority: improving literacy. Reading is the “gateway skill” on the path to lifelong learning. Students who can read and understand information and apply it to their lives are well on their way to success. Students who cannot read begin to struggle academically as early as the primary years, and they are likely to drop further behind as content becomes more complex and expectations increase.

Because reading is vital to student and school proficiency, we must be concerned about reading performance data from Kentucky's spring 2000 core content tests (see box). Obviously, we have a lot of work to do. What are the Kentucky Board of Education and the Kentucky Department of Education doing to help our state's students learn to read? The board wants all students to read proficiently by the end of primary and to build on that foundation throughout their school years. One consideration is to target resources and efforts on all schools in which 20 percent or more of the students score at the novice level in reading.

At the department, a Literacy Team is gathering data and best practices to determine what teachers need for successful reading instruction at all grade levels. We are committed to meeting those needs. We link schools to federal and state supports ranging from research to consultants to grants for putting nationally known reading strategies to the

test in Kentucky classrooms.

On Feb. 5, the Literacy Team delivered a list of recommendations to the Kentucky Board of Education. The report calls for specific actions or discussions in these broad areas:

- a review of teacher preparation programs and professional development opportunities, with a focus on reading instruction that is not an addition to teachers' already full schedule but an integral part of the teaching process;
- greater support and resources including the preparation of reading leaders at the district and school levels;
- strategies for making reading relevant to students of all abilities and cultural backgrounds;
- strategies for evaluating the reading ability and progress of each student, detecting problems early and intervening effectively;
- responding to the needs of struggling readers in all grades.

At the board's direction, we are working to refine these recommendations. In the meantime, we continue to support researched-based and successful professional development programs such as the Kentucky Reading Project and the Middle-Level Reading Academies. We continue our reading improvement partnerships with others, including the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development and the Kentucky Institute for Family Literacy. While all partners agree on the need for attention to reading at all grade levels, the most logical first step seems to be a focus on the early years. Imagine the impact that early reading proficiency would have on our efforts to close the academic achievement gap and keep students in school until they graduate.

Getting to proficiency by 2014 is the goal, but we can't reach it if students can't read, understand and apply information. Students must learn to read so they can



Photo by Rick McComb

Primary student Payton Govin and Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit chat about the day's activities at Silver Grove Elementary. Wilhoit visited the school and seven others during January and early February to learn how “high-poverty” schools guide students to high levels of achievement. See Page 13.

read to learn. It's as simple, as complicated and as important as that.

Commissioner Gene Wilhoit invites comments on this topic. Phone him at (502) 564-3141, send e-mail to gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us, or mail correspondence to 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601.

To learn more about the department's literacy efforts, go to www.kde.state.ky.us/osle/extend/literacy/. For direct assistance, contact the consultants listed on that Web

page, or contact Michael Miller, director of curriculum development, at (502) 564-2703 or mjmiller@kde.state.ky.us.

Reading Trend Data Kentucky Public Schools Spring 2000

	Elementary	Middle	High
Novice	3%	14%	3%
Apprentice	65%	53%	85%
Proficient	31%	30%	12%
Distinguished	1%	3%	0%

Teacher calls on Wilhoit to be realistic about what teachers and students can do

Editor's Note: A Jefferson County middle school teacher in her second year of teaching sent a letter to Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit via e-mail, criticizing his commentaries in the October and November issues of Kentucky Teacher. The teacher has given permission to print these excerpts from that letter, followed by the commissioner's response.

Dear Mr. Wilhoit,

I am absolutely furious at two commentaries you have written. You comment on a goal that all students become proficient by 2014. You say that to get there we need to focus next on three things: great teaching, high-quality instruction and outstanding instructional leadership.

Mr. Wilhoit, where is the focus on individual student accountability? Why do we teachers constantly take the blame for low performance by our students? Every teacher I know is teaching to the KERA goals and standards. When is anyone going to put some pressure on the *students* to do their best? I have students who are motivated, bright and enthusiastic

about learning and school, but I also have students who are on drugs or asleep in class and have bad attitudes. I do my best to engage them and make class interesting. I stop just short of setting myself on fire to get their attention!

I am more than sick and tired of the "we need better, more-qualified teachers" rhetoric. Would you like to know what we need, Mr. Wilhoit? We need parents who care about their children. We need parents to read to their children at a very early age. We need parents to raise their children with values such as respect, honesty and integrity so we will not spend valuable time on behavior rather than academic issues.

In addition to regular-curriculum students in my classes, I have 17 exceptional child education students, plus 20–25 others who missed qualifying for that category by just a point or two. If these students can get to apprentice on the 8th-grade level by the time they graduate from high school, they would be working *to their ability!*

With the teacher shortage at a critical level, you should be doing



Photo by Rick McComb

Meyzeek Middle School teacher Bethany Mull listens as Corey Evancho shares her views about a novel she read. Mull, now in her second year of teaching, has concerns about the balance of student and teacher accountability and the state's expectation of proficiency for all students.

everything in your power to set honest and realistic goals. This in no way means not setting high standards for every student. Students must work to 100 percent of their individual ability, whatever that ability is. For some it is apprentice, perhaps even novice.

I love teaching. It is hard and demanding work, yet I would not want to be doing anything else.

However, I will not be around to teach for many more years unless some things change — mainly, that teachers get some respect and that (education policy makers) set high yet realistic goals.

Sincerely,
Bethany Mull
Meyzeek Middle School

Commissioner Wilhoit's Response

**Dear Ms. Mull
and All Kentucky Teachers:**

Thank you for sharing your concerns with me. Although I have been out of the classroom for a number of years, I consider myself a teacher and feel most rewarded and excited when I am with children. I remember the joys and frustrations of teaching, and I truly appreciate how hard Kentucky's teachers work. Teachers deserve a major portion of the credit for our state's quantum leaps in public education.

I frequently talk and write about the need for improving the quality of instruction. I do so because I believe instruction is the most important variable in a child's education. It is teaching that matters, more than parentage, economics or background. I do so because I believe teachers need increased support.

For these reasons, I am pushing for better opportunities for teachers — opportunities to grow and be engaged in rewarding experiences that result in improved education for children.

I have heard from many teachers who want the state to make students more accountable for their own academic progress. This is a major challenge, because we are working within a system designed to measure district and school performance and not individual student performance. Still, we must expect all students to take responsibility for their learning, and educators and parents have an obligation to help them develop that sense of responsibility. But many students are growing up in circumstances and conditions that pull them away from responsible behavior.

It is regrettable that teachers must

compensate for society's shortcomings, but we must, for the sake of our children and our society. We must not give students opportunities to opt out of learning, and we must remember that our efforts will reach many struggling youngsters in ways that are not immediately apparent. I ask all of you to persist and to share with us your suggestions for meeting this challenge.

Your point about some students not being capable of proficiency is one I've heard from other teachers. Educators are realists. We know that some students will achieve at higher levels than others. But who can say which students will succeed and which ones won't — and, even more to the point, which ones *can't*? We cannot presume to know, and so our charge is to teach and reach them in different ways so that all students have

equal opportunities to learn. Children take their cues from adults. They will strive to meet our expectations, high or low. Only when we consider all students capable of proficiency will all students achieve to their highest individual levels of capability.

Ms. Mull, you obviously care deeply about your students and about teaching. I hope my response has given you a new perspective on Kentucky's goal of proficiency. It is our rallying point for helping all students — and teachers, too — climb as high as they can go. With support from you and other caring teachers, I believe we can achieve even more than we dare to think we can.

Sincerely,

Chapman Center likes early results of computer networking curriculum

By Sharon Crouch Farmer
Kentucky Department of Education

Fifty Covington Holmes High School students are preparing for their futures with real-time experiences in information technology, and they're contributing to their community in the process.

During the first semester of the 2000-01 school year, the students wired two classrooms at Chapman Academic Vocational Education Center, 16 computers in the Junior Technology Center and a community resource computer room at John G. Carlisle Elementary School.

Roger Svoboda, a former industrial electronics instructor at Chapman AVEC now trained in computer networking technology, uses curriculum provided by Cisco Systems, Inc., to accomplish goals that touch the entire community while providing students with invaluable skills and knowledge.

"The students get state-of-the-art technology exposure, the opportunity to earn a national skill certification, college credit and good resume material," said Svoboda. "The school district saves money on the wiring of classrooms and network installations, and at John G. Carlisle Elementary, the community gets a state-of-the-art computer lab for adult literacy programs."

Chapman AVEC is one of the networking academies around the state that offers the Cisco program in design, maintenance and troubleshooting for computer networks. Chapman serves as a local academy, working closely with Northern Kentucky Technical College, part of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and a regional academy for the Cisco program. The four-semester curriculum is available at 11 regional academies throughout the state and, through them, to local high school academies.

High school students in the Cisco program are actually already enrolled in the state's technical college system. They earn college credit and are able to move seamlessly into the college classroom to continue the same program after high school graduation.

Instructors for the program are involved in comprehensive professional development. "There was an eight-week evening class for them during two semesters, then a two-week class in the summer that was full-time," Svoboda said. Instructors initiate classes in their schools after their first semester of training.

The curriculum for teachers is exactly the same as that for the students, according to Svoboda. "The only difference is that we are given additional explanation so we can communicate to the students why we do certain things or do them a certain way," he said.

The curriculum's focus is on routers, the technology that drives the Internet. "Routers drive the entire industry right now, and that means good career opportunities for these students," Svoboda said.

Svoboda said the curriculum was easily aligned with Kentucky Core Content. "The fact that this curriculum is designed for high school students makes it very usable, too. Most of these types of programs in this field are aimed at postsecondary students," Svoboda said. Vocabulary has been a stumbling block for many students, an issue Svoboda is addressing. "We are starting a class for 9th-graders to prepare them for the upper-level classes," he said.

He added that the curriculum is constantly being updated to make it easier to understand, more logical and easier to adapt. Svoboda was able to adapt the curriculum for the hands-on experience at the elementary school this semester.

"The real-time work experience was a great model of the Cisco chapter on design and documentation," he said. "We just used our own project instead of their information, but the students still have to take the Cisco test."

All course materials, even tests to be administered by teachers, are available online. Students can study anytime from any networked workstation at home, at the library or at school.

Svoboda suggests that schools work closely with district technology coordinators, the Kentucky Community and Tech-

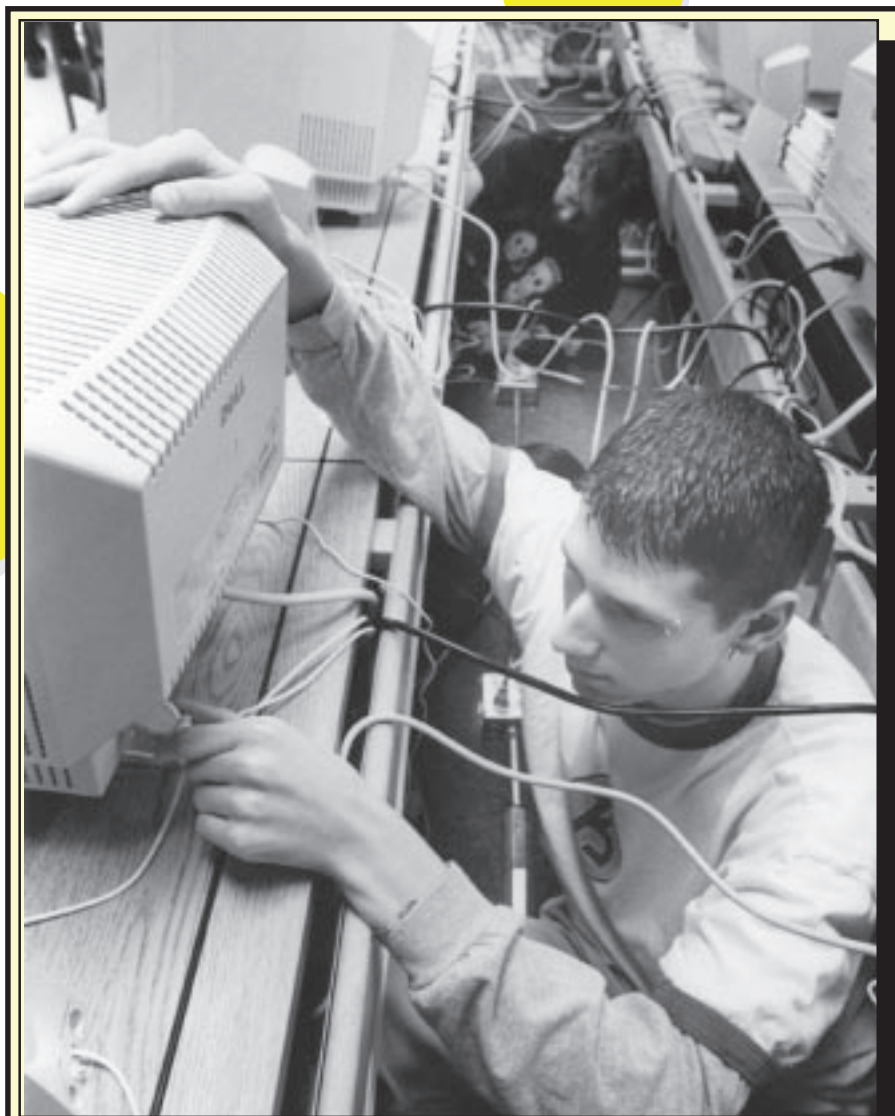


Photo by Rick McComb

Josh Caudill, a senior at Covington Holmes High School's Chapman Academic Vocational Education Center, networks computers in a community resource room at Carlisle Elementary School. Fifty Chapman students are working toward national skill certification and careers in information technology and contributing to their community in the process. By installing wiring and hardware in schools, they gain technical experience and save money for the school district.

nical College System and colleagues with similar programs. "Our program is not yet a year old, and we already have one student pursuing the program at a Kentucky technical college and one at the University of Cincinnati studying computer science."

For more information on the program,

contact Roger Svoboda at Chapman Academic Vocational Education Center in Covington at (859) 655-6582, ext. 6582. Send e-mail to him through the KETS global listing or at rsvoboda@covington.k12.ky.us.

Where will Kentucky find engineers in the future?

By Sharon Crouch Farmer
Kentucky Department of Education

There are more than 1 million jobs in this country today without workers with the skills to fill them. Data from the U.S. Department of Labor suggests that this situation will only worsen as the number of jobs in a few critical areas increase and workers aren't ready to fill them. The department reports that engineering is among the top 10 occupations predicted to grow the fastest through 2006 and in the top 20 for number of job openings. At our nation's present rate of graduating technology professionals, the report says, we will not be able to meet that demand.

Part of the problem stems from inadequate preparation in high school for postsecondary study in engineering and technology areas. A report compiled last year by the Kentucky Science and Technology Corp. ranks the state 45th in the number of science and engineering graduate students for every 100,000 people.

Last spring, in response to these findings, the Kentucky General Assembly passed the Kentucky Innovation Act, funding a host of initiatives and low-interest loans and grants to high-tech companies. Shortly afterward, Gov. Paul Patton created the Kentucky Innovation Commission and charged it with leading the state away from an economy based on coal, tobacco and textiles to one based on knowledge, ideas and technology.

For this initiative to succeed, a foundation must be laid. Elementary and secondary schools must better prepare students to meet the tough college course requirements of these science-, mathematics- and technology-driven fields.

One avenue being used by three Kentucky schools — Morgan County High, Henderson County High and Jeffersontown High — is of national origin: Project Lead The Way. This na-

tional not-for-profit organization joins forces with public schools, higher education and the private sector to increase the quantity and quality of engineers and engineering technologists in the work force. Project Lead the Way is in 25 states, including Kentucky, and recently became a partner with the High Schools That Work initiative of the Southern Regional Education Board.

The project's four-year sequence of courses works with traditional high school mathematics, science and technology curricula to prepare students for college engineering coursework. It incorporates the standards set by the National Academy of Sciences, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the International Technology Education Association.

The first-semester class, Introduction to Engineering, is focused on using design software to solve problems, with an emphasis on two-dimensional geometric construction and three-dimensional modeling. The next course, Digital Electronics, is an applied logic course in which students design and test electronic circuitry. The Principles of Engineering course explores how engineers and technicians use mathematics, science and technology to solve problems and develop motor control circuits. Computer Integrated Manufacturing applies robotics and automation in the production of actual products from 3-D designs using computer numerical control equipment.

In Engineering Design and Development class, teams work with a community mentor to research, design and construct a solution to a real engineering problem.

Teachers in Project Lead The Way take part in an intensive program that begins with a week of readiness training (if needed) to establish a baseline of mathematics or computer skills.

A two-week summer training institute at the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York is the heart of the program. The project provides technical support, and materials are continually updated

to maintain the state-of-the-art quality of the courses. An annual conference brings the program into focus for school counselors where the program is available.

(continued on Page 6)

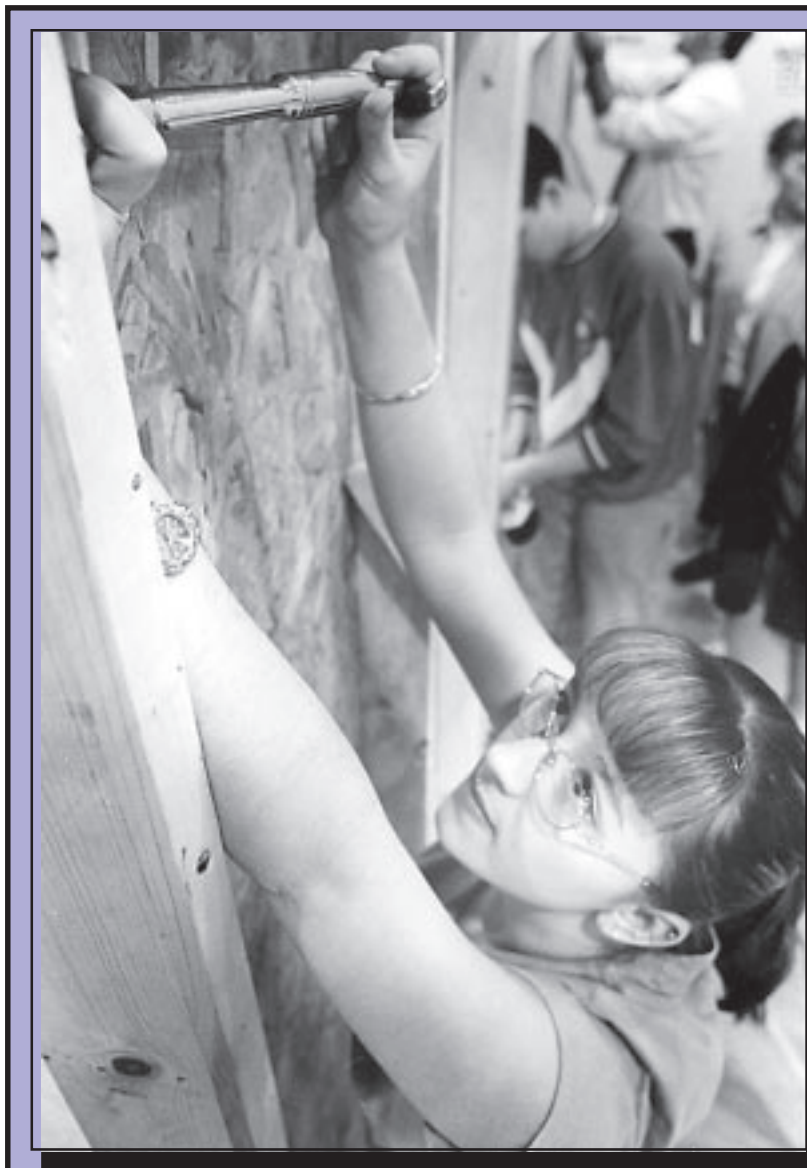


Photo by Rick McComb

As a hands-on activity in her pre-engineering class at Morgan County High School, junior Amy Daniel helps build a set for a play at East Valley Elementary. In a push to attract high-tech manufacturing companies to the community, the high school is training students for engineering and engineering technology jobs.

...These three schools may be a good place to start

Morgan County High

Morgan County High School takes the name of Project Lead The Way literally, using it to help lead the area into competition for high-tech manufacturing companies to boost the local economy. The concept and the curriculum are unique for Morgan County because they are training students for jobs that aren't yet in the area.

The project is gaining wide support. "Parents can see long-range benefits for their children to get good-paying jobs," said Lowell E. Cantrell, the school's pre-engineering instructor. Teachers support the program and encourage students to take Project Lead The Way classes. "Students were hesitant at first because of the words 'pre-engineering,'" said Cantrell. "Now they realize there are many benefits of the program, even if they don't go directly into engineering."

At Morgan County High, all students have the opportunity to take project courses. "We believe that all students can benefit from the critical thinking and problem-solving skills taught in the program," Cantrell said, "as well as the practical applications of mathematics, science and communication."

Henderson County High

Major construction is under way at Henderson County High School, and major curriculum change in industrial/technology education is taking place as well.

When responses to a survey revealed that students wanted more technology training, the school took up the challenge. "We looked at the Project Lead The Way program and discussed it with some students who had graduated, attended universities and entered the engineering field," said technology education teacher and vocational coordinator Roy East.

"They all concluded that the curriculum would have helped them."

East is most impressed with the two-week professional development that is an integral part of the project and calls it "the best I have received from any class. The instructors are aware of potential problems. It's hands-on with very little lecture." Participants receive the complete package of curriculum materials, including software, and e-mail support is always available. East felt so well prepared, in fact, that he collaborated with the physics class on a group project this semester. "They were working on a simple machines unit that corresponded with our problem-solving unit," he said.

School renovation is expanding

the makeup of the student body from grades 10-12 to 9-12. Courses in the program will remain open when freshmen can easily access the program.

"This semester, students mastered many more skills than I dreamed possible," East said. "Even if they choose not to continue the curriculum, they still have had an experience that will be valuable to their future."

Jeffersontown High

Keep the cardboard boat afloat. That was the single, common goal of a group of Jefferson-town High School students last spring.

Teams of pre-engineering students in the Jefferson County school's Project Lead The Way program used computer-assisted design, mathematics, geometry, science and a little ingenuity to create, build and launch boats trimmed in waterproof duct tape.

The program is offered to those students identified as potential college engineering candidates. "We don't want to set students up to fail," said Chuck Pierce, Project Lead The Way coordinator at the school's Magnet Career Academy. "Eighth-graders take tests to identify capabilities. We review transcripts and report cards and try to make sure that those in the program can compete."

To improve and maintain articulation and integration with core academics, the school had both a math-

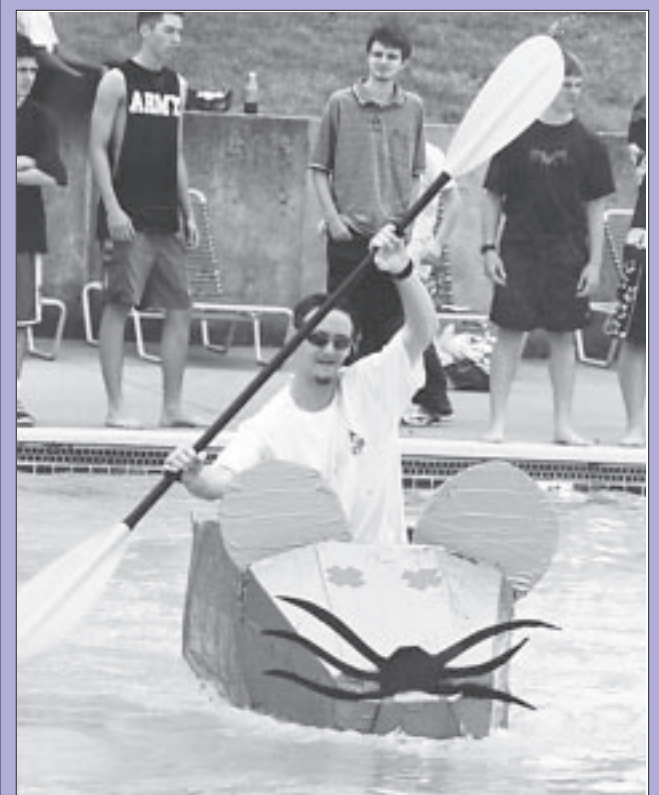


Photo by Rick McComb

Ryan Lazenby rows across the pool in the cardboard "mouseboat" he and his teammates designed and built using principles they learned in Jeffersontown High School's pre-engineering courses.

ematics and a science teacher trained in the Project Lead The Way curriculum. "The resulting collaboration and understanding has been invaluable to the program," said Pierce, who calls the program the "best thing since sliced bread."

Pierce says that although the program is expensive to maintain, business and industry are eager to join the partnership. "Hardware is an issue. You've got to keep computers 'state of the art,'" he said. "Financing could be difficult without the help of business partners." The school has a growing list of business partners who have an investment in budding engineers. Pierce says businesses are looking for this potential work force to fill a widening gap.

Learn More About Project Lead The Way

- On the Web: www.pltw.org
- At Jeffersontown High School Magnet Career Academy: Chuck Pierce, (502) 485-8019, cpierce1@jefferson.k12.ky.us (or through the KETS global list);
- At Jefferson County Public Schools' School-to-Careers office: Sheree Koppel, (502) 485-4305; skoppel1@jefferson.k12.ky.us.
- At Henderson County High School: Roy East, (270) 831-5020; reast@henderson.k12.ky.us.
- At Morgan County High School: Lowell Cantrell, (606) 743-8002, lecantrell@morgan.k12.ky.us.
- At the Kentucky Department of Education: Division of Career and Technical Education, (502) 564-3472

New to the 'Net Lesson 6:

What is project-based learning, and how can my students benefit?

By Fran Salyers
Kentucky Department of Education

Welcome back to New to the 'Net. In this lesson . . .

1. Review what “project-based learning” means and why it works.
2. Discover ways to use the Internet for project-based learning in your classroom.
3. Learn about WebQuests and how they support learning by students and teachers.

To locate Lesson 6 online, select the New to the 'Net main page in your online bookmarks list, or go to the Kentucky Department of Education's home page (www.kde.state.ky.us) and click on the mascot “Newt,” then click on the Lesson 6 link.

What is project-based learning?

You're probably using project-based learning in your classroom, even if you don't call it that. In project-based learning, teachers guide students through structured activities that result in products, presentations or conclusions. In the process of working on their projects, students gain content knowledge and skills while learning important real-world competencies such as teamwork, communication, planning and problem solving.

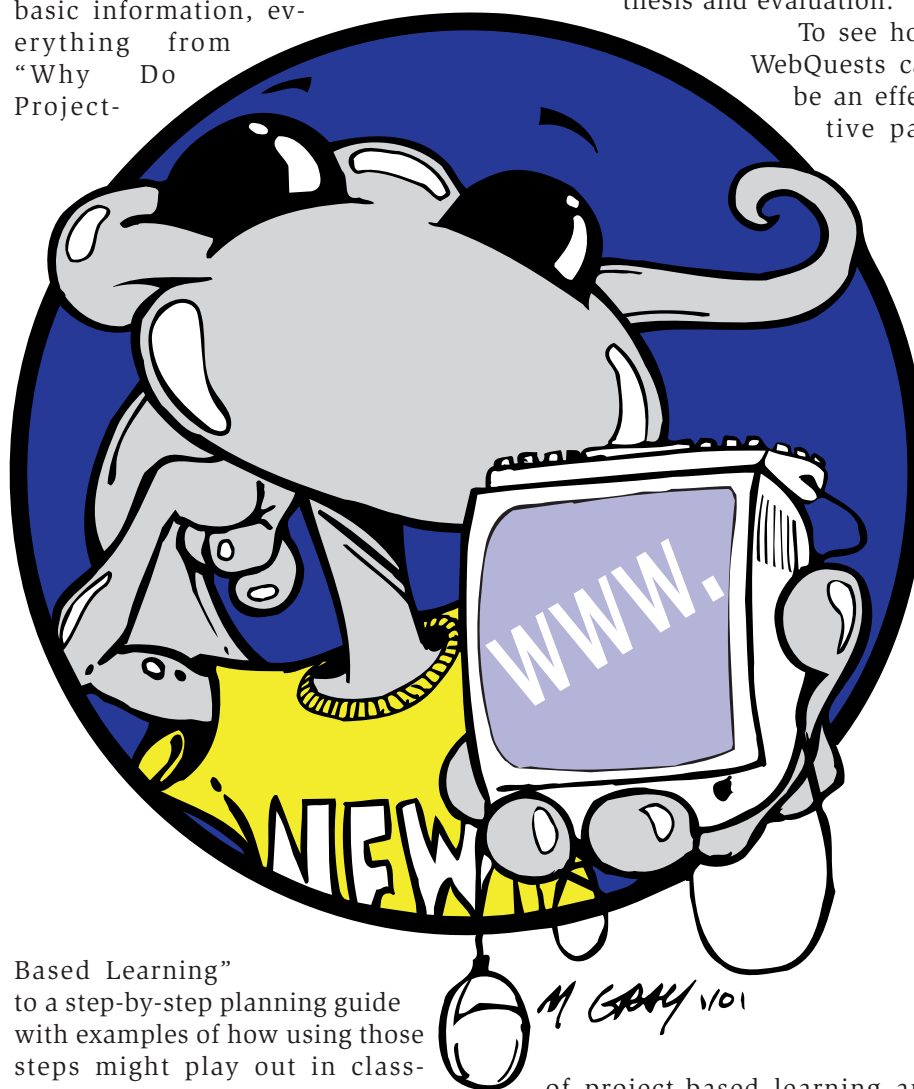
The World Wide Web is a “natural” for project-based learning. Students (and teachers) who use e-mail and the Web to do their research, exchange information, and develop and present their final products are gaining many skills, including technology skills they can use for a lifetime.

Getting Started

How can you start incorporating the Internet into project-based learning? One way is to check out a certain Web site that, while posted by a school district in California, can be useful to teachers anywhere. On the Lesson 6 page, click on “Project-Based Learning Using Multi-Media” (<http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/>), then go to “PBL&MM Topics” for a menu of basic information, everything from “Why Do Project-

ented activity in which students go to the Web for most or all of the information they use. Teachers direct students to online WebQuests that lead to specific sites loaded with information related to the class topic or project. WebQuests lead directly to pertinent information, so students spend less time digging and more time sharpening higher-order skills, including analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

To see how WebQuests can be an effective part



Based Learning” to a step-by-step planning guide with examples of how using those steps might play out in classrooms.

WebQuests

While project-based learning can involve all kinds of media (Internet, presentation and word processing software, photography, printed matter and so on), a WebQuest project is an inquiry-ori-

ent of project-based learning and other instruction strategies, click on “All About WebQuests” on the Lesson 6 page.

Once you see how WebQuests work, you'll probably want to write one for your students. If you do, consider sharing it! Send the URL to your New to the 'Net mentor, Naomi Cornette, at ncornett@kde.state.ky.us.

kde.state.ky.us.

More Resources

The Web can lead you to many resources for using the Internet as a tool for project-based learning. You'll find some of them listed behind the “More Resources” link on the Lesson 6 page. Be sure to check out “Newt's Bonus Sites,” too!

Reflect

What did you learn that you can use in your classroom right away? Click on the “Reflect” link on the Lesson 6 page and answer the questions there. Documenting your answers could be useful if you are taking this online course for professional development credit.

Send comments and questions to your New to the 'Net mentor, Naomi Cornette, by e-mail at ncornett@kde.state.ky.us (or through the KETS global list) or by phone at (502) 564-7168 or (800) 533-5372.

Coming in March Lesson 7: Using the Web to Meet Special Needs

- Assistive technology available for students
- Funding sources for assistive technology devices and adaptations
- Online sites that help students with disabilities find resources

New to the 'Net started in the August issue of *Kentucky Teacher*. If you have questions about the series or need copies of Lessons 1-5, go to www.kde.state.ky.us on the Internet and click on Newt, the course mascot, or send a request to Kentucky Teacher, 1914 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us.

Teaching Students to



Four language arts teachers share their successful techniques

By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

When Johnson County Middle School language arts teacher Pam Burton taught writing 10 years ago, her approach was very different from what she does today.

"My emphasis was not on the child at all," she said. "It was on the portfolio and getting it done."

Today, Burton's focus is her 7th-graders — the writers, not the writing. Daily she provides skills and strategies that lead her students to better communication through the written word. It's reaping rewards. Her students strive to improve each time they write.

Seventh-grader Ryan Daniel wants to be a proficient writer, and he knows his writing is getting there.

"What I wrote last year I couldn't even turn in as a first draft for Mrs. Burton now," he

said. "I like that she gives us examples. I do a lot better because I can see what she wants our writing to be like. She writes (models) for us and shows us how to write."

Daniel scored his first "proficient" rating on a writing piece in November.

Burton uses many approaches to instill that desire for proficiency in her students. They read real-world examples of the three writing forms — letter, article and editorial — on which they will be assessed. They analyze the examples to learn narrative and persuasive writing. They find out how to glean information from given texts, graphics or charts and use it in their writing. They

learn the parts of a letter. Burton teaches them when to use subheads, how to write a title and what punctuation to use in lists of items.

The walls of Burton's classroom are covered with posters that prompt students to remember purpose, audience and mode, or PAM, an idea she got from Powell County Middle School language arts teacher Crystal Neal. Burton composes writing samples on an overhead projector as she teaches. She guides students

through pre-writing exercises such as brainstorming, selecting leads and identifying main ideas.

This instruction prepares students for real-life writing opportunities in language arts and other content classes. "I want them to think like writers," Burton said. "They aren't practicing writing, they are practicing the instruction to improve their writing."

Once students know the strategies and gain the writing skills, she added, they can confidently respond to assessment tools such as on-demand prompts, open-response questions and portfolio writing.

Providing real-life opportunities takes intentional planning on the part of Burton and the five other members of her 7th-grade team. These teachers always think about how writing can flow naturally out of their content instruction.

The Johnson County 7th-graders write in all their classes. It might be a letter in language arts to the principal about reducing homework; in mathematics, an editorial on the electoral college; in social

studies, a series of articles about contributions early civilizations made to today's world; in science, an article about how to survive a natural disaster.

Content teachers grade the assignments for content knowledge. Burton assigns a writing grade. After students receive grades, Burton has them reflect on their writing. They discuss in groups and with her how they could improve the writing. If they make revisions within four days, Burton regrades the assignments.

Portfolios, on-demand writing and open-response questions no longer loom large in Burton's language arts classes. Students write to show they can communicate ideas, not to produce a portfolio piece or respond to an on-demand prompt. By late November, her students had at least a dozen pieces in their writing folders. By February, she said, nearly one-third of her students will have selected pieces from their folders to complete their writing portfolios for assessment this spring.

"I'm giving my students the support they need to write," she said. "As their writing improves, I pull back that support a little at a time until they can write without assistance."

Other language arts teachers at all levels are using classroom practices similar to those Burton uses, and they're seeing their students' writing improve. At the primary and elementary levels, teachers spend extra time with students in prewriting. Guided instruction helps students learn to understand writing prompts, think about the writing task and plan what they will write. As teachers "remove the scaffolding," students move toward more independent writing.



Student writer James Fitzpatrick receives guidance from teacher Pam Burton at Johnson County Middle School. Burton says that shifting her instructional focus to "the writers, not the writing" is getting positive results.

Photo by Rick McComb

On-demand Writing Forms Used in Assessment

Kentucky Core Content Tests ask students to narrate an event; persuade; or respond to a given text, graphic or chart as they write in these forms:

Grade 4:

- a letter
- an article

Grade 7:

- a letter
- an article
- an editorial

Grade 12

- a letter
- an article
- an editorial
- a speech



Photo by Rick McComb

Teachers Rhonda Merion, Kim McCoy, Avery Fairchild, Terry Quillen, Pam Burton and Doris Robinson collaborate to plan real-life writing opportunities for students at Johnson County Middle School. Students write in every class. Content teachers grade the written pieces for content knowledge, and language arts teacher Burton assigns writing grades.

Emergent Writers

Jill Myers' kindergarten students at Athens Elementary in Fayette County feel like writers because they write every day.

"People don't think children this young can write," Myers says. "But they can. Early primary is a crucial time to work with emergent writers."

Myers writes down her thoughts and ideas in front of her students on a flip chart so they see her as a writer. Students "share the pen" with her and write on the flip chart. They write individually about something that springs from a lesson or classroom activity. They make independent decisions on topics about which they want to write.

Students also share their writing with the class. "It's exciting when students read their pieces aloud,

and they see how others respond to what they've written," Myers added.

4th-grade Writers

Lori Tatum's 4th-graders at Central City Elementary in Muhlenberg County talk about SPAM and tables when they prepare to write.

SPAM reminds the students to think of situation – purpose – audience – mode as they read a writing prompt. With a prompt projected on the classroom wall, Tatum guides her language arts students in identifying and marking those key words with different colored highlighters.

Tatum says most 4th-graders come to her able to write leads and conclusions without much problem. The trouble comes in writing what goes in between. That's where a table analogy helps. Tatum uses proficient writing models to show her students how they must reinforce their main idea (the table top) with four supporting sentences (the legs of the table) to convey their thoughts in the body of their writing. "This helps them learn to plan their writing," she added.

High School Writers

Writing instruction doesn't end when students enter high school. It continues at South Laurel High School with guided instruction, instruction, instruction, said English teacher Karen Jackson.

Students read and discuss the different forms of writing — letters, articles, editorials and speeches — on which they will be assessed as seniors. She continues to reinforce how a narrative is written, what a persuasive piece must do to the audience and how to write

about a given text, graphic or chart. In English classes, as well as content areas, students get opportunities to write to authentic audiences for authentic purposes. They reflect on their writing and share their writing with other students and the teacher.

"Writing must come naturally out of instruction so it has more meaning to students. It can't be an add-on or something you stop teaching to do," Jackson said. "By high school, students are beginning to realize the relevance of on-demand writing in the real world."

To contact teachers quoted in this article, send e-mail to them through the KETS global list or to the following Internet addresses, or phone them at these numbers:

Pam Burton, pburton@johnson.k12.ky.us, (606) 789-4133

Jill Myers, jmyers@fayette.k12.ky.us, (859) 381-3253

Lori Tatum, ltatum@muhlenberg.k12.ky.us, (270) 754-4474

Karen Jackson, kjackson@laurel.k12.ky.us, (606) 862-4727

On-demand Writing Resources

KET videos: Two professional development programs about teaching on-demand writing are available from Kentucky Educational Television. Copies are \$10 per tape (one for elementary, one for middle/high school) plus \$3.95 shipping charge for one or both tapes. Order by calling Roger Tremaine toll free at (800) 945-9167, extension 7217, or by faxing him at (859) 258-7399.

On the Web: Materials from the KET professional development program are available on the Internet at www.kde.state.ky.us/oapd/curric/Writing/default.asp. The site also offers links to other resources for writing instruction. One of those resources, "Internal Research Questions," developed by a member of the instructional support team in Oldham County and the district's cluster leaders, can help teachers talk with their students about writing pieces.

Regional Writing Consultants

Region 1 — Mary Ann Waltman, (270) 762-3217
Region 2 — Sylvia Abell, (270) 746-7063
Region 3 — Cindy Bradley and Ellen Lewis, (502) 485-6062
Region 4 — Cathy Caudill, (859) 292-6778
Region 5 — Jamee Barton, (859) 257-4907
Region 6 — Joan Powell, (606) 862-0282
Region 7 — Deborah Hampton, (606) 783-5372
Region 8 — Modena Sallee, (606) 886-0205

To contact these regional consultants by e-mail, locate their names on the KETS global list.

Understanding the Language of Writing Instruction and Assessment

On-demand writing: Language arts teachers teach on-demand writing. On-demand writing assignments assess writing, not content knowledge. Kentucky Core Content Tests (KCCT) offer students a choice of two writing prompts, each presenting a situation or providing context for writing.

On-demand prompt: An on-demand writing prompt specifies audience, purpose and format for the response. Writing time for each prompt on the KCCT is 90 minutes. On-demand assessments are made in grades 4, 7 and 12. (See On-demand Writing Forms Used in Assessment.)

Open-response questions: Students demonstrate content knowledge in answering open-response questions. The questions do not specify form and audience. Students have a one-page limit to answer each open-response question on the KCCT. Open-response questions on the KCCT assess students' content knowledge in grades 4, 5, 7, 8, 10 and 11.

Portfolio writing: Students at every grade level write pieces for their individual writing portfolios. Their portfolios of reflective, personal expressive, literary and transactive writing pieces follow them from grade to grade. Students may revise pieces in their portfolios to submit for assessment in grades 4, 7 and 12 as part of the KCCT. Portfolio writing uses the same processes, skills, criteria and standards as on-demand writing.

Murray Middle keeps traditions while tapping the power of reform

School in a historic building has maintained its culture of excellence, scoring among the top dozen middle schools in the state.

By Jim Parks

Kentucky Department of Education

Editor's Note: April 11, 2000, was the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Kentucky Education Reform Act. To mark the occasion, the Kentucky Department of Education published a report, "Results Matter: A Decade of Difference in Kentucky's Public Schools." Murray Middle School is one of 12 schools profiled in that report. These 12 schools are examples of successes happening in many schools — and inspiration for schools still looking for the keys to future success.

History and tradition are evident at Murray Middle School. This structure, on the National Register of Historic Places, stands in a block that has been the site of schools for 126 years.

Murray Middle continues a tradition of academic excellence, scoring among the top dozen middle schools in the state. In 1999 the school's mathematics score was in the high 90s, just a few points short of the long-term goal of 100. "Our scores are the highest in the region," says Principal Steve Kroehler, "and we rank in the top five districts in the state on the 6th-grade CTBS test."

Although Murray Middle's scores are among some of the highest in the state, the school still copes with some of the same challenges seen by other schools, including a growing enrollment and an increasingly diverse student population. The school has active programs in Title I, special education, gifted and talented, migrant education and English-limited learners.

While Murray has maintained its traditions, it has also tapped into the power of reform programs. For example, the Kentucky Education Technology System helps the school

build on its high levels of parent involvement. From their home computers, using a password, parents can access their children's grades and disciplinary records and get homework assignments at any time. Parents without computers can check on homework assignments by phone.

The school has zeroed in on the state's "Core Content for Assessment," which Principal Kroehler calls "a life saver. This document permits teachers to focus on what they need to teach," he said. "Parents know what is expected, and students coming from states stressing standards-based curriculum have a smoother transition."

Teachers regularly plan collaboratively, both within grades and across grades, to ensure continuity of the curriculum. Teachers use assessment data to identify students needing extra help and refer them to after-school Extended School Services classes and quarterly intersession terms.

Teachers are changing the way they teach, lecturing less and using more hands-on activities. The use of technology is becoming routine. Professional development is integrated with curricular goals based on the school's consolidated plan.

One fifth-grade teacher, Greg Gierhart, has embraced many new techniques for mathematics instruction. His students have a choice of working alone or in pairs in the classroom. They use graphing calculators to speed computations. He teaches aspects of algebra, geometry and statistics all at once. He uses open-response questions to get students to write about mathematics. Students create PowerPoint presentations of what they learn. Gierhart and Judy Tucker, a social studies teacher, designed an

"ancient world" thematic unit that calls for students to make a Chinese abacus. To help parents understand the new approaches to mathematics, students once a week explain to their parents a problem they have solved.

Gierhart holds on to some tried-and-true instruction methods. He still requires students to know mathematics basics such as fractions, multiplication tables and decimals, but he expands on them in his classroom.

The tradition of high standards and high expectations lives on at Murray Middle. "I never accept that my students can't do something," Gierhart said. "It may just take some of them longer."

For more information about Murray Middle School's success,

contact the principal, Stephen Kroehler, or teacher Greg Gierhart at (270) 753-5125 or by e-mail at skroehler@murray.k12.ky.us or ggierhart@murray.k12.ky.us. Both are on the KETS global list.

The print edition of "Results Matter: A Decade of Difference in Kentucky's Public Schools" is available for \$15 per copy. To order, phone Windy Newton at (502) 564-3421; send e-mail to wnewton@kde.state.ky.us; or write to the Department of Education Bookstore, 19th Floor, Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601. To order online, go to www.kde.state.ky.us/comm/pubinfo/bookstore/ (click "Browse and Order Online," then "Education Reform.")

The report is available free of charge on the Internet at www.kde.state.ky.us/resultsmatter.



Photo by Rick McComb

An electronic keyboard is a learning tool for Jamieson Massey (left) and Kenneth Trice in teacher Chuck Haney's class at Murray Middle School, which has students in grades 4 through 8. Technology and hands-on instruction have helped the school's students post some of the state's highest middle-grades scores on core content tests. Teacher Sherri Bazzell (top of page) guides students in a mathematics lesson.

New partnership means cash rewards to top teachers

By Fran Salyers

Kentucky Department of Education

From now on, Kentucky's teachers of the year will get a lot more than a certificate and a handshake. \$10,000 more!

For years, the three finalists in the Kentucky Teacher of the Year Program have received well-deserved attention and publicity but mostly token tangible rewards. The teacher of the year received a \$1,000 check from a private source plus a \$2,500 travel grant from the Kentucky Department of Education.

That situation changed in a big way on Feb. 7, when the department and Ashland Inc. announced a new partnership that combines two long-standing teacher recognition programs and provides cash awards to the state's top teachers.

In a surprise presentation in Frankfort, Ashland Inc. CEO Paul W. Chellgren presented Ashland Teacher Achievement Award checks to the 2001 Teacher of the Year finalists chosen last November. Teacher of the Year Harriet Jo Biehle, who teaches 4th grade at Worthington Elementary, received \$10,000. Middle School Teacher of the Year Kathy Lowe of Barren County Middle School and High School Teacher of the Year Cindi Reedy of South Oldham High received \$3,000 each.

In future years, Ashland Inc. will award the same Teacher Achievement Awards to Kentucky's three state-level finalists plus \$500 each to the three finalists in the state's eight education regions. The awards are unrestricted, permitting teachers to use them as they choose. Since 1988, Ashland Inc. has presented Teacher Achievement Awards totaling more than \$325,000 to 130 teachers.

Starting in 2002, the Department of Education will sponsor a new benefit for the state teacher of the year: a one-semester sabbatical to be used as the teacher chooses. Possibilities include joining the staff at another school to assist the faculty or learn new strategies, assignment at the department or one of its regional service centers, teaching or taking a course at a college or university, or applying additional resources into the teacher's own classroom or school.

For more information about the Kentucky Teacher of the Year Program, contact Donna Melton at (502) 564-3421 or dmelton@kde.state.ky.us, or check the Internet at www.kde.state.ky.us (select "Awards and Recognition" in the drop-down menu). Information about the Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Awards is available from Chris Yaudas at (859) 815-3846 or www.ashland.com/education/awards/.



Photo by Rick McComb

Gov. Paul Patton congratulates Kentucky's teachers of the year during a news conference announcing a teacher recognition partnership between Ashland Inc. and the Department of Education. Participating were (left to right) Ashland Inc. Vice President Dan Lacy; Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit; Education, Arts and Humanities Secretary Marlene Helm; Ashland Inc. CEO Paul W. Chellgren; and Kentucky teachers of the year Harriet Jo Biehle, Kathy Lowe and Cindi Reedy.

Surprise!

The folks at Ashland Inc. wanted the presentation of \$10,000 to Kentucky's teacher of the year to be a surprise. They got what they wanted.

Jo Biehle, chosen in November as 2001 Kentucky Teacher of the Year, was listening attentively as Ashland Inc. executives and several state officials, including Gov. Paul Patton, announced the merger of two annual teacher recognition programs. Biehle's facial expression changed from interest to astonishment as she gradually realized that she would receive, that very day, an Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Award of \$10,000. Tears rolled down her cheeks as she accepted the check.

"I can't believe this!" she told well-wishers after the presentation ceremony. "This week I ordered 25 recorders (musical instruments) for my students. I put them on my Visa card and figured I'd find a way to pay for them somehow."

She now has more than enough to pay for the recorders.

Dates to Remember: Kentucky Teacher of the Year Awards

Feb. 20: Distribution of Application Forms - Teacher of the Year applications are available on the Web sites of the Department of Education (www.kde.state.ky.us), The Partnership for Kentucky Schools (www.pkfs.org/) and Ashland Inc. (www.ashland.com/education/awards/); from superintendents and principals; and from the Kentucky Education Association and Department of Education regional service centers.

April 2: Application Deadline - All applications are due at the Kentucky Department of Education by noon.

April 6-8: Judging - Every application will be reviewed and scored independently by three respected educators. The top-scoring candidate at each

level (elementary, middle and high school) in the state's eight education regions will receive a \$500 Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Award. The top nine (three at each level) will become semifinalists for teacher of the year.

May 7-16: Site Visits - Judges will visit the schools of the nine semifinalists, then select one elementary, one middle school and one high school teacher of the year.

May 17-18: Interviews - Judges interview the three finalists.

May 22-25 - One of the finalists becomes the next Kentucky Teacher of the Year and the state's representative in the National Teacher of the Year program.

Cardiovascular health program helps students develop good habits for life



By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

FACT: Cardiovascular disease is the Number One killer of men and women in Kentucky.

FACT: The rate of cardiovascular disease in Kentucky is 13 percent higher than the national average.

FACT: Kentucky leads the nation in the number of student smokers.

FACT: Maintaining a healthy body weight, adopting a healthy diet and avoiding tobacco use can decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease.

FACT: Kentucky teachers have written standards-based units of study to help make students more aware of the need to improve their cardiovascular health by changing their diets and lifestyles.

One component of Kentucky's Cardiovascular School Health Program provides elementary, middle and high school units of study that address different aspects of cardiovascular health. Teachers from all areas of Kentucky wrote the units and aligned them to

state and national standards. Each unit was piloted at least five times in schools before inclusion in the program.

Two of the teachers who wrote units of study are Melissa Clark and Mary Beth Armstrong, 8th-grade teachers at Rowan County Middle School. They wrote and piloted a six-week unit for health classes. Both teachers have family members with heart disease, so their interest in helping students learn to eat right, exercise and never take up smoking comes on a personal level, Clark said.

Their unit, "The Right Choice," covers nutrition but also addresses issues such as serving sizes and how advertising influences what people eat. "The unit has many hands-on activities to help students gain awareness of themselves, heart disease and the choices they need to make to be healthy," said Clark, a science teacher.

In one activity, students learn about serving size by determining how many single servings are in a "super-sized" order of fast-food french fries. They read nutrition labels on food packages and find

out how many servings, calories and fat grams the product contains.

Another activity sends students to the Internet for information on nutrients. They research what each nutrient does for the body, which foods are high in the nutrient and what happens if the body doesn't get the nutrient. Students work in groups to design charts containing the information and present their findings to the class.

Students get the opportunity to develop a heart-healthy food and write an advertising jingle about it.

They also keep journals of what they eat. In class, they analyze their diets to see if they are eating properly.

"Teachers need to be aware of the cardiovascular health consultants in the regional offices and these units as resources for their teaching," said Clark. "All schools can benefit from the units developed for this program."

For more information about the piloting of this unit, contact Clark and Armstrong at (606) 784-8911 or by e-mail at mclark@rowan.k12.ky.us and mbarmstr@rowan.k12.ky.us or through the KETS global list.

At the Heart of the Program

Program materials refer to Kentucky's Cardiovascular School Health Program as the first of its kind in the nation. The Kentucky Department of Education, in alliance with the Kentucky Department of Public Health, is making a variety of resources available to schools to promote cardiovascular health for students and staff.

Four cardiovascular health coordinators facilitate the program from their offices in the Department of Education's regional service centers. The coordinators offer technical assistance regarding school cardiovascular health issues, including incorporating health into the consolidated planning process. They help schools evaluate and enhance their school health programs for students and staff and provide professional development in cardiovascular health areas.

Professional development opportunities based on the cardiovascular health units of study will be available in March. Because the units integrate learning in multiple content areas, the coordinators encourage all teachers to attend. Space is limited at these sessions.

For more information about the program or professional development opportunities, contact these cardiovascular health consultants:

Renee White
Regions 1 and 2
(270) 746-7063
rwhite@kde.state.ky.us

Joyce Swetlick
Regions 5 and 7
(606) 783-5373
jswetlic@kde.state.ky.us

Jennifer Embry
Regions 3 and 4
(502) 485-6463
jembry@kde.state.ky.us

Jim Tackett
Regions 6 and 8
(606) 862-0282
jtackett@kde.state.ky.us

On the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site, the page at www.kde.state.ky.us/osis/resources/tp/cv/default.asp has links that provide information on improving the cardiovascular health of students, their families and school staffs.

Teachers interested in expanding and enhancing Kentucky's Cardiovascular School Health Program may want to contact the Louisville Science Center about an upcoming exhibit. The center will offer teacher information packets on the exhibit, "The World Within Us," which opens in late March. Phone (502) 561-6100, or send e-mail to lousci@bellsouth.net.



Photo by Rick McComb

Eighth-graders Shayla Menville (left) and Jackie Cates design a chart containing information on vitamins for their cardiovascular health unit at Rowan County Middle School.

Wilhoit visits eight schools with high poverty, high scores

Brittani Campbell, a primary student at Western Elementary in Anderson County, could read only six words at the beginning of the school year. In late January, she sat down and read a book to Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit.

Seeing first-hand how high-poverty schools are helping their students achieve at high levels was the impetus that took Wilhoit to eight schools throughout Kentucky in January and early February.

At least 50 percent of the students at each school the commissioner visited receive free or reduced-price meals. Each school also attained a score of at least 80 (out of a possible 140) in one or more of

the seven subject areas tested on the Kentucky Core Content Tests.

Wilhoit visited one school in each of the department's eight service center regions. The eight schools are among more than 400 that met the same criteria.

In addition to Western Elementary, Wilhoit visited Englehard Elementary (Jefferson County), Wrigley Elementary (Morgan County), Roundstone Elementary (Rockcastle County), Lost Creek Elementary (Perry County), Cravens Elementary (Owensboro Independent), Carlisle County Middle School and Silver Grove High School (Silver Grove Independent in Campbell County).

During each visit, Wilhoit observed

classroom activities and talked separately with students, administrators and teachers, gathering information about instructional practices, curriculum planning, professional development and other aspects of education. He also asked what each school needed from the Department of Education to get to proficiency — a score of 100 on a 140 scale — by 2014.

After the visits, Wilhoit reported that all eight of the successful schools shared these characteristics:

- a curriculum that systematically covered Kentucky's core content;

- a true focus on individual students and individual student work;

- in-school collaboration as the most valued form of professional development for teachers;

- instructional time carefully managed and jealously guarded;

- high levels of parental support and involvement;

- programs in place to diagnose problems and intervene early and effectively.

The commissioner will visit several low-performing schools March to identify barriers to student learning and examine strategies the schools have for improving achievement.

Take mathematics courses free!

Attention, mathematics teachers of students in grades 5 through 8. You still have time to apply for the Teachers' Professional Growth Fund to participate in professional development in mathematics or take a college mathematics or mathematics methods course.

The funds will reimburse you up to \$2,500 for registration, tuition, stipend, mileage, hotel and other expenses associated with the mathematics professional development activity or course. This is an opportunity to increase your mathematics knowledge, attend the NCTM conference, or take courses toward your master's degree — free!

Applications are due March 30 for spring and summer activities. For information and an application form, go to www.kde.state.ky.us on the Web and select "Teachers' Professional Growth Fund," or contact Ann Bartosh or Courtney Murphy at (502) 564-2106 or by e-mail through the KETS global list or at these addresses: abartosh@kde.state.ky.us or cmurphy@kde.state.ky.us.

KET invites students to join 'What If ...' reading project

What if all the readers in Kentucky read the same book at the same time? Kentucky Educational Television is working with partners throughout the state to find out. The chosen book is Barbara Kingsolver's "The Bean Trees," the May selection of "bookclub@ket," the network's monthly book discussion series.

KET's director of education, Kathy Quinn, encourages high school teachers to get their students involved. "The project gives high school teachers the opportunity to introduce students to an engaging, critically acclaimed Kentucky author," Quinn said. "Teachers are working with us to create online lesson plans and resources. The project also will include opportunities for on-the-air, online and face-to-face discussions about the book."

Participating students and teachers will be eligible to win a trip to meet Barbara Kingsolver and join a studio audience on May 31 for the taping of a discussion with the author.

Quinn said she understands that the timing of the project may not be the best for high school teachers. "We had to plan the project around Barbara Kingsolver's availability," she said. "We will post teacher resources for 'The Bean Trees' on the Web in February to allow teachers more flexibility in deciding when their classes will read the book."

She added that a videotaped discussion of the book will be available by April 26 for teachers to use with their classes.

Individuals and classes can sign up for the statewide reading project online at www.ket.org/bookclub or by calling (800) 334-8409. For more information, visit www.ket.org/bookclub/whatif.htm on the Internet or contact Kathy Quinn or Mary Duncan at (859) 258-7260; (859) 258-7390 (fax); or KQuinn@ket.org or Mduncan@ket.org.

For information about KET's Signature Series profiling Southern writers, go to www.ket.org/itvvideos/offering/reading/signature.htm. For teacher guides, go to www.ket.org/education/guides/signature2.pdf. KET will block-feed the Signature programs for taping in April. For details, contact Kathy Quinn.

Watch
Inside Kentucky Schools
A Kentucky Department of Education TV Production

30 minutes of news and features about education in Kentucky

Second & fourth Saturday of every month

- noon Eastern/11 a.m. Central on KET
- 5:30 p.m. Eastern/4:30 p.m. Central on KET2

Also check TV listings for air times on local cable stations.

For program information, visit
www.kde.state.ky.us/comm/mediasvcs/

Host
Pia Cummings

'Project Citizen' can build students' citizenship skills

By Deborah Williamson
Administrative Office of the Courts

According to a National Assessment of Educational Progress report of findings in 1999, only one-fourth of U.S. students are proficient in knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for effective citizenship. Only one-fifth of America's 18- to 25-year-olds voted in the 1998 election.

Such statistics beg adults to find ways to involve young people in citizenship activities. "We the People ... Project Citizen" provides a powerful means for

addressing this need.

Administered by the Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts, "Project Citizen" is a national civic education program that promotes competent and responsible participation in state and local government. Students work together in class projects to identify and study local public policy issues, then develop recommendations and action plans. Each class prepares a portfolio and presents its findings and recommendations to local officials, who often implement all or parts of the recommendations.

For example, students in Harrison

County researched traffic hazards at a local four-way stop intersection. Their findings prompted local officials to install a traffic light there. In Bell County, students' research of violence in their school resulted in the installation of "red phones" for reporting suspicious situations to school authorities.

Classes may enter their portfolios in competitions held in each Congressional district. The winning portfolios move on to statewide competition in Frankfort. (This year's state competition for middle schools that participated during the 2000-01 school year is sched-

uled for May 22. The state alternative setting competition will be on April 10.) State winners compete at the national level.

The Administrative Office of the Courts offers "Project Citizen" program training and technical assistance, a core content correlation guide and a limited number of curriculum materials free of charge to teachers. For more information, contact Deborah Williamson or Rachel Bingham at (800) 928-2350 or by fax at (502) 573-1448. Send e-mail inquiries to RachelB@mail.aoc.state.ky.us.

Grants are available for local history projects

Teachers doing local history projects may apply for grants available from the Kentucky Historical Society's Community Services Office.

The office's Mini-Grant Program offers grants up to \$250 for visits to historic sites within 100 miles of the school. Only one mini-grant per school per year will be funded. Applications for the 2000-01 school year are due by March 30. Applications for summer or year-round school or for the 2001-02 school year will be accepted after April 1, 2001.

The Project Grant Program offers \$100 to \$500 for projects that promote local, regional or state history. These may be collaborative programs with a resource teacher or outside organization, but the application must come from a classroom teacher. The grant period is July 1, 2001, to June 30, 2002. The application deadline is March 31, 2001.

For applications and details, contact Elizabeth Stith at the Kentucky Historical Society by e-mail to Elizabeth.stith@mail.state.ky.us or by phone at (502) 564-1792, ext. 4477.

Agriculture, environment can fit into daily teaching

With National Agriculture Day coming on March 21 and Earth Day coming on April 22, the time is right for teachers to incorporate agriculture and the environment into mathematics, science and language arts instruction.

Strategies and materials for doing so are available through a Kentucky Department of Agriculture program, Kentucky Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom. The program offers a workshop that includes training plus materials and teaching units for K-12 teachers.

Workshop participants will receive a stipend; \$100 for classroom materials; and access to speakers, a mobile education unit and field trips. The program pays travel expenses and the cost of hiring a substitute teacher. Teachers who create a teaching unit after completing the workshop receive an additional \$100.

Workshops are scheduled in Somerset, March 23-24; Murray, June 1-3; Hopkinsville, June 7-8; Pikeville, Sept. 7-8; and Elizabethtown, Sept. 14-15. (A workshop took place in Lexington in February.)

The Department of Agriculture also offers a national K-12 curriculum, Project Food, Land and People. Teachers who complete training receive program materials. An 8th-grade model aligned to the state program of studies is available at www.kyagr.com/enviro_out/education/programs/FLP/8th%20Grade.htm. Other lessons will be posted on the Web soon but are available in hard copy now. To request a copy or additional information about the Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom program, contact Rayetta Boone, Division of Agriculture and Environmental Education, at (502) 564-4696 or by e-mail at rayetta.boone@kyagr.com.

Educators eligible for aid to become counselors

To help solve a school counselor shortage, the Kentucky Counseling Association and participating colleges offer financial help to educators interested in taking summer courses toward certification as school or mental health counselors.

Each of the following colleges or universities will provide one tuition waiver: Eastern Kentucky University, Lindsey Wilson College, University of Louisville, Morehead State University, Murray State University, Western Kentucky University, Xavier University. The association will provide up to \$100 per participant for books. Students beginning work for a master's degree will get preference.

Each applicant must submit a completed application, documentation of acceptance by the participating university and a letter of recommendation. The submission deadline is April 15.

For more information and an application, visit the Internet at www.kyca.org (select "2001 Summer Scholarship") or contact Bill Braden, executive director of the Kentucky Counseling Association, at 622 Timothy Dr., Frankfort, KY 40601; bradenkca@aol.com; or (800) 350-4522.

Talk to us!

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THE Bulletin Board

By Lisa Y. Gross
Kentucky Department of Education

Leadership conference scheduled

The Council Development Branch of the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Leadership and School Improvement will host a leadership conference March 29 and 30 at the Galt House East in Louisville. The conference is for school-based decision making coordinators, principals, superintendents and school council members. Session topics include data analysis, legislation, scholastic audits, school council policy, parents' roles and successful strategies.

Go to www.kde.state.ky.us/olsi/leaders/sbdrm/default.asp for conference information and online registration. The site also has news about a new e-mail listserv for school council members.

CONTACT: Don Schneider, (502) 564-4201, ext. 4735;
dschneid@kde.state.ky.us

Extended School Services plans summer institute

Teachers, principals and extended school services coordinators: Mark your calendars for the ESS Summer Institute, set for June 18 and 19 at the Galt House East in Louisville.

The agenda will include a nationally known keynote speaker plus sessions on promising practices for regular ESS and innovative grant programs. Participants can receive professional development or leadership credit.

The event can accommodate the first 500 registrants. The department plans to send agenda, cost and registration information to district ESS coordinators before mid-March. Also watch for details on the department's Web site (www.kde.state.ky.us).

CONTACTS: Karen Whitehouse or Mary Niswonger, (502) 564-3678;
kwhiteho@kde.state.ky.us; mniswong@kde.state.ky.us

Summer sessions offer ideas on civic education programs

The Administrative Office of the Courts invites teachers to free summer institutes on implementing two "We the People" civic education programs:

- "Project Citizen" — a middle-grades civic education program that promotes competent and responsible participation in state and local government (see Page 14). Institute from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on June 21 in Frankfort.
- "The Citizen and the Constitution" — the history and principles of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. Institutes from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on July 16 (elementary), July 17 (middle grades) and July 18 (high school).

CONTACT: Rachel Bingham, (800) 928-2350; fax (502) 573-1448;
RachelB@mail.aoc.state.ky.us

Parent institute applications due April 16

Parents interested in being chosen for the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership 2001 have until April 16 to apply.

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence plans to hold institute sessions this fall in Bowling Green, Williamsburg, Jamestown, Paducah, Louisville, Carrollton and Prestonsburg. Parent participants will attend three two-day sessions to gain knowledge and skills for leadership with an emphasis on increasing academic achievement for all students.

For more information, go to www.cipl.org on the Internet or phone (800) 928-2111.

Louisville Orchestra invites students to concert with historical theme

Looking for an opportunity to integrate the arts and humanities with history? The Louisville Orchestra's Making Music Concert Series will offer a concert with a Holocaust theme for middle and high school students at 10:30 a.m. on March 15 at the Louisville Palace.

The concert will feature Michael Tilson Thomas' narrated work "The Diary of Anne Frank," Dvorak's "Serenade for Strings," and "Study for Strings," composed by Pavel Haas during his internment at Terezin.

Tickets are \$6 per student. One teacher or chaperone per 10 students may attend free of charge. Curriculum materials are available.

CONTACT: The Louisville Orchestra Education Department, (502) 587-8681

Arts education showcases set for March

The Kentucky Center for the Arts has planned arts education showcases at seven sites in Kentucky. These one-day events are designed to familiarize Kentucky educators with performing and visual artists, arts organizations and cultural institutions available as resources for schools. Participants will see stage performances and exhibits and receive an arts education resource directory. The registration fee is \$7 per person.

The showcases will take place at the following sites:

- March 1 - W. Lyons Brown Theatre, Louisville
- March 2 - Western Kentucky University
- March 6 - Appalshop, Whitesburg
- March 12 - Singletary Center for the Arts, Lexington
- March 13 - Thomas More College, Crestview Hills
- March 16 - Ashland Community College
- March 29 - RiverPark Center, Owensboro

Showcase planners have mailed registration brochures to all school principals. For additional brochures or information, contact Jeffrey Jamner at (502) 562-0703 or jjamner@kca.org or visit the Kentucky Center for the Arts Web site at www.kentuckycenter.org/education.

KFCEC 46th Annual Conference set for March

The Kentucky Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children (KFCEC) will conduct its 46th annual conference March 1-3 at the Executive Inn in Louisville. Topics include teacher education, inclusion, classroom strategies and interventions, IDEA, early childhood, assessment, wraparound services and curriculum.

CONTACT: Linda Ann Ward, 131 Wells Purdom Drive, Almo, KY 42020; lward@mccracken.k12.ky.us

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Kentucky Teacher

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Kentucky Teacher is published by the Kentucky Department of Education for teachers, school administrators, counselors, support staff, parents, students, legislators, community leaders and others with a stake in public education. Please address correspondence to Kentucky Teacher, 1914 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; e-mail kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us.



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Printed with state funds by the Winchester Sun, Winchester, Ky., on recycled paper
ISSN 1526-3584

Kentucky Teacher

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

FEBRUARY 2001



Photo by Rick McComb

LINKING GENERATIONS AND CULTURES — From a poster on the wall, German-American physicist Albert Einstein appears to encourage Stasya Berber during chemistry class at Fairdale High School in Jefferson County. Stasya is one of approximately 620 Kentucky K-12 students registered as having American Indian heritage. She is associated with the Paiute tribe.

“Educators are realists. We know that some students will achieve at higher levels than others. But who can say which students will succeed and which ones won’t — and, even more to the point, which ones can’t? We cannot presume to know.”

Commissioner Gene Wilhoit, responding to a teacher’s concerns about Kentucky’s expectation of proficiency for all students. See Page 3.

Kentucky Department of Education Gene Wilhoit, Commissioner
Visit the Kentucky Department of Education’s Web site: www.kde.state.ky.us